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## MISCELLANEA.

JOSEPH IBN VERGA'S EXTRACT FROM THE  
CAIRO-MEGILLA.

AMONG S. Pinsker's MSS. there is a note to no. 43, and the accurate and reliable details of the Purim of Cairo, which it contains, prove it to be a contemporary composition; although the copy of Jacob b. Mardochai of Mangup, in the Crimea, was not made earlier than 1679. Unfortunately, it is only a verbatim copy of Joseph ibn Verga's extract from the Megilla of Cairo, as contained in *Shebet Jehudah*, ed. Wiener, 111. In spite of its brevity, it displays traces of more intimate knowledge of the events than the official record, the Megilla of Cairo, published in the JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, VIII, 277-81. Ahmed Pasha is mentioned here as the conqueror of Rhodus, to whom the Sultan, in his gratitude, grants the governorship of Egypt. The history of Ahmed's defection, although only briefly alluded to, is very well known to the author. The citadel, into which those Janitsari who still remained faithful to the Sultan had withdrawn, was still to be conquered. The number of slain is, it is true, given as only amounting to one hundred, and the duration of the siege as no longer than three days. On the other hand, we learn here, in accord with Turkish history<sup>1</sup>, the name of Muhammed Beg<sup>2</sup>, whom Ahmed had promoted to be one of his three Vizirs. With him the advice originated, to have the Jews plundered on behalf of the state, instead of abandoning them to the robbers, who, in the general rioting, had commenced to treat the Jews as outlaws. Our report tells us, in accordance with the Megilla<sup>3</sup>, that five Jewish citizens had already been assassinated by robbers,

<sup>1</sup> Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches* (Pest, 1834), II, 37.

<sup>2</sup> מחמט בני : 42 (Vienna, 1869), p. 42. For ושמנו מאני in Ibn Verga's report, where Wiener, p. 228, translates *Mani*, Pinsker's MS. has ושמנו מחמט.

<sup>3</sup> JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, VIII, 278, l. 7 from the bottom : ויהיו חמשה יתוים.

when Muhammed Beg undertook to conduct the spoliation in a legitimate manner. The Purim of the year 1524 was a sad day for the Jews of Cairo. The demand made by the government it was impossible to comply with. Ahmed publicly declared that his intention was to exterminate the Jews. When the danger was at its worst, rescue came, as it were, in a miraculous manner. Our report contains details which cannot be found elsewhere. The congregation had with great difficulty collected a portion of the demanded sum, and brought it to the castle<sup>1</sup>. Arrived there, the officer Zada<sup>2</sup> told the deputation that Ahmed was in the bath; they would have to wait, and they would see then the beginning of the end<sup>3</sup>. Hardly had he uttered these words, when a messenger came, informing them that Ahmed had fled, because Muhammed had attacked him in the bath. Our narrator also knows exactly that it was with 3,000 Circassians<sup>4</sup> that Muhammed organized the pursuit of Ahmed Sheitan. Muhammed himself, who had only a moment before appeared as a very Haman against the Jews, now, in his own person, set free the chiefs of the Jews, who were prisoners in the castle, before he departed for the pursuit of his rebellious governor. The 27th of Adar was appointed to be kept as a day of miracles, a day of "Nissim," because the wonderful deliverance, the flight of Ahmed, and the exposure of his head at Cairo, are indicated by that word. Our report accords also with the Megilla of Cairo, in regard to the tradition of that name<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> המורד, Ibn Verga, correctly, ובש"ז באדר הלכו ויצעקו לפני המוסר.

<sup>2</sup> (p. 43, l. 7). ור"א or ור"ה הסופר.

<sup>3</sup> אתם תאחרו (תאסרו) עד יצא המלך מהמרחץ ותראו נִדְבָר וְאֶבְרָן. In spite of the vocalization of these words, we must, probably, read here דרב ודרב, after Esther ix. 5. Ibn Verga has הרג וברגן. The officer threatens the Jewish community with extermination, because they had not fulfilled Ahmed's demand.

<sup>4</sup> The word נירקו, in the document, p. 42, l. 5, at the bottom, and נירקו, p. 43, l. 9 and 11, should be נ' ירקו = Circassians; they remained faithful to Soliman, in contrast to Ahmed's Mamelucks. Ibn Verga has the word גירקש.

<sup>5</sup> או קיימו וקבלו עליהם ועל זרעם משהה ושמהה יום שבעה ועשרים לאדר וקראו שמו יום נסים כי גם להמלש ושימו אורו על נס. Here also our report is more correct, and nearer to the events, than the stylistically artificial Megilla. Zunz, *Die Ritus*, 130, gives correctly the 27th of Adar as Purim of the Most-arabic congregation of Cairo.